

Boylan, Zachary Calderone, Gurjiwan Chahal, Charles Debczak, Scott Donnellon, Luke Ensing, Ben Fernquist, Connor Fischer, Ananth Ghosh, Marta Grivins, Paul Harrington, Emma Lawson, Julien Levesque, Curtis Manore, Connor McQueen, AnnMarie Moolenaar, Dylan Moser, Shreyans Munot, Isabel Olds, Gavin Poulin, Joseph Price, Jessica Reimchen, Sarah Richardson, David Rose, Gerrit Rummel, and Nathan Schubring; the United States Military Academy at West Point Class of 2021 graduates from Michigan. I am positive the Class of 2021 will excel in their future endeavors, and I ask my colleagues to join me in extending their best wishes as they begin their service to our Nation.

RECOGNIZING FUNERAL DIRECTOR
AND EMBALMER RAUL
VILLEGAS, JR.

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 17, 2021

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Funeral Director and Embalmer Raul Villegas, Jr. (May 15, 1962—January 20, 2021). Mr. Villegas demonstrated never-ending patience and compassion to the families in his community during his life.

Mr. Villegas was born in Laredo, TX and attended J.W. Nixon High School. He then attended the Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service and graduated in 1986. After that, he served his 35-year career as a Texas Licensed Funeral Director and Embalmer dedicated to the families of Laredo and Webb County, Texas. During this time, he was a great team leader and community member. As a funeral service professional, he met and exceeded expectations by having ceaseless patience and sympathy. Mr. Villegas had the right words for every situation and was reliable and strong even when those around him were undergoing difficult times.

Mr. Villegas will have an enduring impact on his family, team members, and all of the families in the community he served. He lived and worked his entire life by the principles of endless patience and kindness. I want to commemorate the life of Raul Villegas, Jr. and his numerous contributions to his community. As we move forward, let us take the time to appreciate Mr. Villegas and his notable life and career. However, in the words of President John F. Kennedy, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

Mr. Villegas is survived by his beloved wife Maricela G. Villegas; children, Raul Villegas III (Melissa Guerrero), Marlene (Fernando Garza, Jr.) Villegas, David (Anabel) Villegas, Danny (Michelle) Villegas, Ricardo (Jessica) Ramirez, Jr., Melissa (Salvador) Silva, Roberto C. Ramirez (Vivian); parents, Raul and Hortencia Villegas; siblings, Irma (Wayo) Butron, Jerry (Lily) Villegas, Eddie (Juanita) Villegas, Javier Villegas, and Sammy (Anna) Villegas; 20 grandchildren; as well as other family and friends.

Madam Speaker, again I rise to recognize the life and career of Raul Villegas, Jr.

INTRODUCTION OF THE GEORGETOWN WATERFRONT ENSLAVED VOYAGES MEMORIAL ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 17, 2021

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Georgetown Waterfront Enslaved Voyages Memorial Act. This bill would authorize the establishment of a memorial on federal land in the District of Columbia commemorating the enslaved individuals who disembarked at the Georgetown waterfront after forced migration to the United States by way of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The commemorative work, to be established by the Georgetown African American Historic Landmark Project and Tour, would honor the enslaved individuals' presence, celebrate their contributions to history, recognize their resilience and fortitude and acknowledge their deeds and feats.

This week, we recognize Juneteenth (June 19), which marks the arrival of the news of emancipation to enslaved African Americans in Confederate-controlled Texas—two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued—the final end of slavery in the United States. Juneteenth celebrates the culmination of the long struggle for freedom from bondage in the United States. This monumental event prompts us to reflect on the past and look to the future.

For four centuries, enslavers packed 12.5 million captive Africans into their ships to sell as chattel in the Americas. The vestiges of this history are everywhere yet scarcely marked, including here in the District. The Georgetown waterfront had an extensive and long-neglected history of involvement in the slave trade. Due to its location at the northernmost navigable point on the Potomac River, North Potomac, as it was then known, the Georgetown waterfront was a busy commercial port that operated as a mid-Atlantic trading center of enslaved people.

The first Africans were brought as slaves through the Georgetown port in 1732. Though records are incomplete, scholars have determined that between that year and 1761, seven ships carrying an estimated 1,475 enslaved people arrived there. Those who survived the traumatic "Middle Passage" voyage were marched through tunnels that led from the C&O Canal, through the sewage system, to a slave auction block on M Street, now Georgetown's main commercial thoroughfare.

Commodities to be sold for profit, these people were assigned no more value in America than that paid for them by enslavers. Slavery and the slave trade remained for generations an integral part of the United States. While the entire contribution of enslaved African Americans in the District and region cannot be determined, we know with certainty that white citizens and the federal government both relied heavily on enslaved labor to build the Nation's capital.

We must not hide from this history. The enslaved individuals, known and unknown, who disembarked at the Georgetown waterfront after forced migration, rest at the core of our Nation's shared history. The atrocities of the system of chattel slavery shed light on our Nation's central struggle between slavery and

freedom—a freedom under which some could be owned, beaten, separated from their families, and denied any rights. This bill provides for the creation of a powerful marker of truth-telling and remembrance. Let us honor the personhood of these individuals, who were repeatedly assumed to have none, so that they will never be forgotten.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RON ESTES

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 17, 2021

Mr. ESTES. Madam Speaker, I was not present for Roll Call vote No. 167 on Agreeing to the Amendment. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 17, 2021

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, on June 16, 2021, I missed Roll Call vote 163. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on H. Res. 479.

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THE ANN ARBOR PEACE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 17, 2021

Mrs. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the anniversary of the Peace Neighborhood Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Their 50 years of service to our community and its families is worthy of commendation.

In Ann Arbor, the Peace Neighborhood Center has served children, families, and individuals affected by social and economic challenges since 1971. The center seeks to foster a community of personal growth and opportunity to break the cycle of poverty and social inequality.

In the past 50 years, more than 16,000 members of the Ann Arbor community have participated in programs that enhance skills, promote education, and teach fiscal independence. Starting off as a place for community members to meet and discuss their concerns, the work of the Peace Neighborhood Center has expanded to after-school programs, jobs programs, substance abuse prevention programs, and so much more.

A half-century after its founding, the Peace Neighborhood Center is a pillar of the Ann Arbor community. At the onset of the Corona virus pandemic, the organization shifted gears by expanding their food distribution program and later spearheaded the effort to vaccinate community members by setting up a vaccine clinic. With the help of their dedicated leadership and their many enthusiastic volunteers,

the Peace Neighborhood Center has lent its unwavering support to those in need, supporting and uplifting all members of our community.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Peace Neighborhood Center. We are grateful for the center's half-century of

impactful work and wish Peace Neighborhood Center continued success in service in the years ahead.